

18 June 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director, Intelligence

FROM : Assistant Director, CR

SUBJECT : The handling and usage of old Intellofax cards and Minicards

REFERENCE : Report of the Library Consultants, Pages viii, ix, 66-67, and 117

1. The Report states in its Summary of Findings, on pp viii and ix,

"Retirement of IBM cards limits the usefulness of the Intellofax system to five or six years of recent materials.

"The non-availability of the older Intellofax cards means that the total investment in Intellofax output is gone after five to six years, and there is no usable way to get at older materials."

Reply: The statements are incorrect. Usefulness of the system is not limited to five or six years, the older cards are not "non-available", and there is a usable way to get at the older materials.

At 8:45 of Friday morning I set out to check this point for myself, without advance warning to anyone that I had any intention of doing so. The reference librarian gave me the codes for "Rail transport" and "Russia", and with these noted down on a slip of paper I went to the microfilm room. There, without any delay, I was shown a machine listing which indicated that the old intellofax cards with these codes were on Reel number so-and-so. The reel was placed in a microfilm reader for me, I was taught how to use the reader, and by 9:05 I had photos of the cards in perfectly good order and legible condition before me.

2. The report states on page 67:

"The cards for the older Intellofax materials have been sent to storage, where it is reported they have become unusable."

Declassify on: 4
No Change in Class. ☐
☒ Declassified
Class. Changed to: TS S C
Next Review Date: 1 APR 1980
Auth: HM 70-3

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Reply: The statement is irresponsible and misleading. No responsible investigator cites hearsay on a matter so easily confirmed or disproven as this. Some of the older cards were sorted and tabulated last November, and about 50,000 of them are being worked on at the present time. Their condition is entirely satisfactory. See sample at Tab A.

3. The report further states on page 67,

"... checking in the Circulation Department which has the film, as well as with the Machine Division, which could theoretically call the cards back from storage, shows that the film had never been consulted nor have the cards ever been brought back from storage."

Reply: It is quite true that the Machine Division had never called back any cards from storage at the time when the Consultants made their inquiry. There had been no need to do so. There is a machine installation at the point of storage where they can be shuffled and tabulated, and we have not yet had any demand for the older cards that could not be satisfied by the microfilm. We would have to call back the cards if, for some request, it was absolutely essential that the older cards be mixed in with the newer ones and a tape prepared from them.

When I asked the custodian of the microfilm how often it had been used, she replied "Not very often. Very seldom, in fact. Not as often as once a month." When I pressed her as to whether it had ever been used she said yes, that it had, and that several months ago there were several demands upon it all at once.

I confess I don't quite know what to make of this. Perhaps the demands that she remembers were generated by the Consultants, but in that case the Consultants would have no excuse for making the statements referred to in paragraph 1 above. The important facts, it seems to me, are (1) that the film is in good condition and readily available, and (2) that it is seldom called for.

4. Further, on page 67:

"Analysts who think they are getting material more than five or six years old from this system are trusting in something that does not in fact happen."

Reply: Tendentious. Partially supported, however, by the facts.

In 1955 we combed out of the files the cards which had been processed through the end of February, 1950. (This cut-off date was selected, instead of 1 January, because it coincided with a change which we had found it necessary to make in the code scheme.) On the date when the combing began, the reference librarians were told

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henceforth to warn all customers that their Intellofax tapes would no longer show the older cards, but that these older cards could be inspected on microfilm if there was need to do so. A notice to the same effect was printed on each Intellofax tape prepared after this time. In late August of 1956 we combed out the remaining cards of 1950, those which had been produced between 1 March and 31 December 1950. At this time a new heading was placed on all Intellofax tapes, the same that is used today: INCLUDED ARE REFERENCES TO CLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE DOCUMENTS PROCESSED SINCE JAN. 1951. CARDS FOR DOCUMENTS RECEIVED EARLIER ARE AVAILABLE ON MICROFILM, WHICH CAN BE SCREENED IN ROOM 1321, M BUILDING. See sample at Tab B. Simultaneously, the Chief of the Library's Reference Branch circulated a notice to her people which told them that all the 1950 cards were now removed from the files, and that customers should be warned accordingly. The notice is still available for inspection*, and it bears the initials of all but one reference librarian. A mistake was made. No one knows how. But one man did fail to get the word, and he did continue to speak of the withdrawn cards as being the "1949 cards", and to make the entry "1950 to date" on his request forms. It is true that the Intellofax tapes themselves bore a notice specifying SINCE JAN. 1951, and there is no reason to doubt that all but one of the reference librarians correctly identified the cards which had now been withdrawn as the "1949 and 1950 cards", or the "pre-1951 cards". Some customers may have been unwittingly misled however, and if they failed to read the notice on the tapes, and failed to observe that no 1950 titles appeared on their lists, then they probably did "trust in something that did not in fact happen."

5. On page 65 the Consultants describe how they set about analyzing the Intellofax system by checking one hundred runs completed in October and one hundred in November. "In each case, the first hundred that had sufficient data to be useful were used. Since there were about 360 runs in these two months, this gave us a sample of about 40% of the total." They studied these 200 to see what period of time the customers had asked the system to search for, and on page 67 they say that out of 200 they found that:

"... 89 asked for six years or more, equals 44.5%. It is very interesting to note that 44% of the requests asked for material more than six years old..."

Reply: A misinterpretation of the data.

I have checked all the request forms for this period, and there are 23 which ask for data from "1950 to date". 19 of these were prepared

* Let no one complain to me, as the Consultants do, about "excessive record keeping".

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by the reference librarian who, as noted in paragraph 4 above, had failed to get the word about the change in dates.

However, out of 365 requests the forms for 129 show the entry "All" or "All dates" in the blank space provided. 129 plus 23 equals 152, which is 42% of 365. Obviously the Consultants interpreted the "all dates" entries as requests "for six years or more, equals 44.5%".

This is a simple misinterpretation, which it will be charitable to regard as unintentional. In truth, however, the forms reflect only the instructions given to the machine room, and when the machine room is asked to search for "all dates" it is understood by one and all that this refers to "all dates now covered by the card files". The machine room does not have custody of the microfilm. The customer has been orally informed (barring mistakes) that his tape run will not cover dates earlier than January 1951; and there is a printed announcement to the same effect on the tape itself. If he wants to see references going back before that date he is told that the microfilm is readily available to him. Even if we admit that it is a little more irksome to have to read microfilm than to receive a printed list in your hands, we would nonetheless suppose that if 44% of the requestors really wanted the old data a good many of them would take the trouble to look at the film. The Consultants themselves report that none of the analysts ever go to this trouble, and our own best judgment is that exceedingly few do so.

CURRENT EVALUATION AND FORECAST

6. The evidence seems to me irrefutable that very few researchers have sufficient interest in the older data to take the trouble to look at the microfilm, and if this is so then surely we are justified in culling out the older cards in order to make space for new. We are justified, that is, provided (1) that the researcher is warned, and (2) that the older cards are readily available to the rare researcher who really wants to see them badly enough to take a few minutes extra time and trouble. These two provisos are met by the present system - insofar as it is humanly possible to do so. I believe that even if we put our warning on the public address system, and if we refused to deliver an Intellofax run to any analyst until he signed an affidavit that he had heard and understood the warning, we would still be accused by a few of having wilfully outraged them.

As compared with conventional indexing systems such as the New York Times Index, the Bibliography of Agriculture, or the Intelligence Publications Index, the Intellofax system has many advantages when it comes to dealing with data other than those of the current year. In any conventional system it would be necessary to search five different annual cumulations, as well as the recent monthly volumes, in order to be sure of covering the data of the current and the past five years.

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~~SECRET~~

With Intellofax we have the current years and months in one cumulative file which can be searched by machine.

7. It is not practicable for us, with Intellofax, to keep the cards from still older years in a single cumulation. We must remove them from the working file by instalments, must film them in series at the time of removal, and must machine-index them at the same time. Thus to search for given codes in two different instalments of older cards, we must search two machine indexes and inspect two reels of microfilm. This is exactly analagous to what must be done with a conventional indexing system, and we hope to find the cure for it in Minicard.

With Minicard, we expect to lick the space problem. We will not need to retire minicards in order to make space for new ones - not for many, many years at any rate - but we undoubtedly will have to make a distinction between relatively recent and relatively old cards. After we have accumulated minicards for five years, say, we will probably set up an "Old Minicards File" to which, each year, we add an instalment of aging cards. But these older cards will be set aside not because of space pressure, but in order to keep the number supplied for routine requests down to a manageable and reasonable number. The older ones will be stored in the same location as the Current File, and they will be collated by machine. Then, when someone really wants the older data, we will have only one old file to search and we will be able to produce the old references in the same format as the recent ones.

When and if we are able to do this I think we will be able to claim with justification that the problem of aged data has been solved.

Attachments: Tab A
Tab B

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Amory *NAH*

I repeat my previous recommendation that before you accept the comments by AD/CR or the statements of the consultants, a face-to-face meeting be held to resolve the differences of opinion as to what was or was not seen or communicated. I am not suggesting a polemic, but rather a serious examination of the findings and the comments thereon. AD/CR accuses the consultants of some pretty serious things both directly and by implication.

The most serious conclusion drawn by AD/CR is on p.4 where he says "The evidence seems irrefutable to me....." The conclusions of the using offices will not support this statement. The lack of confidence in the system is still over-riding in both OSI and ORR.

(DATE)

21 June 1957

FORM NO. 101 REPLACES FORM 10-101
1 AUG 54 WHICH MAY BE USED.

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TAB A

This is a sample Intellofax tape produced from old cards.

The old cards were ordered from the Record Center about 10:00 AM on 17 June 1957, and were delivered in Washington about 12:15 PM on 18 June.

The cards were then run through three different IBM units to test their condition for machine processing. No faults were found.

They were then run through the Intellofax Transmitter. With perfect results, as can be seen in the sample.

Next 6 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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OFFICE
OF
CENTRAL REFERENCE

INTELLOFAX LISTING

THIS TAPE WAS PRODUCED
BY THE INTELLOFAX SYSTEM
WHICH PERMITS THE SELEC-
TION AND ARRANGEMENT OF
REFERENCES BY SUBJECT,
AREA, SOURCE, SECURITY
CLASSIFICATION, AND DATE.

INCLUDED ARE REFERENCES
TO CLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE
DOCUMENTS PROCESSED
SINCE JAN. 1951. CARDS FOR
DOCUMENTS RECEIVED EAR-
LIER ARE AVAILABLE ON
MICROFILM, WHICH CAN BE
SCREENED IN ROOM 1321, M
BUILDING.

EFFECTIVE 15 APRIL 1954,
NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE
SURVEYS ARE NO LONGER
INTELLOFAXED. THE IN-
TELLIGENCE PUBLICATIONS
INDEX (IPI) COVERS CURRENT
NIS'S.

THE FOLLOWING OCR REF-
ERENCE SERVICES SHOULD
ALSO BE CONSULTED IF
NECESSARY:

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
CONSULT THE CIA LIBRARY,
INFORMATION SECTION, M
BUILDING, [REDACTED]

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO
YOUR REQUEST FOR REF-
ERENCES ON (ISC) SUBJECT
CODES:

TAB B

This is the head-
ing used on all Intello-
fax tapes since late
August, 1956, when all
1950 cards still in the
working files were with-
drawn.

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